



FACT SHEET

All Children 6 to 23 Months Old Should Get Flu Shot

A New Recommendation

Beginning this flu season, **CDC recommends that all children 6 months to 23 months old get a flu shot.**

Children Less Than 2 More Likely to Be Hospitalized

Recent studies have shown that children less than 2 years old – even healthy children – are more likely than older children to end up in the hospital if they get the flu. In some cases, they can even die.

To protect their health, all children 6 months to 23 months old should be vaccinated against the flu. (The flu shot is not approved for use in children less than 6 months old.)

The Studies

Two studies published in 2000 showed the same results: that otherwise healthy children under 2 years old were more likely to be hospitalized for serious flu complications than older, healthy children. These studies were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and the *Journal of Pediatrics*.

Based on this information, CDC recommends that all children 6 months to 23 months old get a flu shot.

Flu-Related Deaths in Children Last Season

During last year's flu season, CDC received reports of 152 flu-related deaths among children under age 18.

- All of these children had influenza infection diagnosed by lab tests.
- Most of the children were less than 5 years old.
- Almost half of the children had an underlying medical condition, but 40 percent were previously healthy.
- Of the 135 children who died that could have been vaccinated, only 5 were "adequately" vaccinated against the flu. Seventy-six children had not been vaccinated against flu at all.

A Note to Parents:

The best time to get vaccinated is October or November. Children getting a flu shot for the first time will need two doses given 30 days apart so begin the process sooner rather than later. (The first dose primes the immune system; the second dose provides immune protection.)

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu, or call the CDC Flu Information Line at (800) CDC-INFO.

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